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1959

VENTURE

Fall 1959

VENTURE

Fall, 1959 *Volume 8, Number 1*

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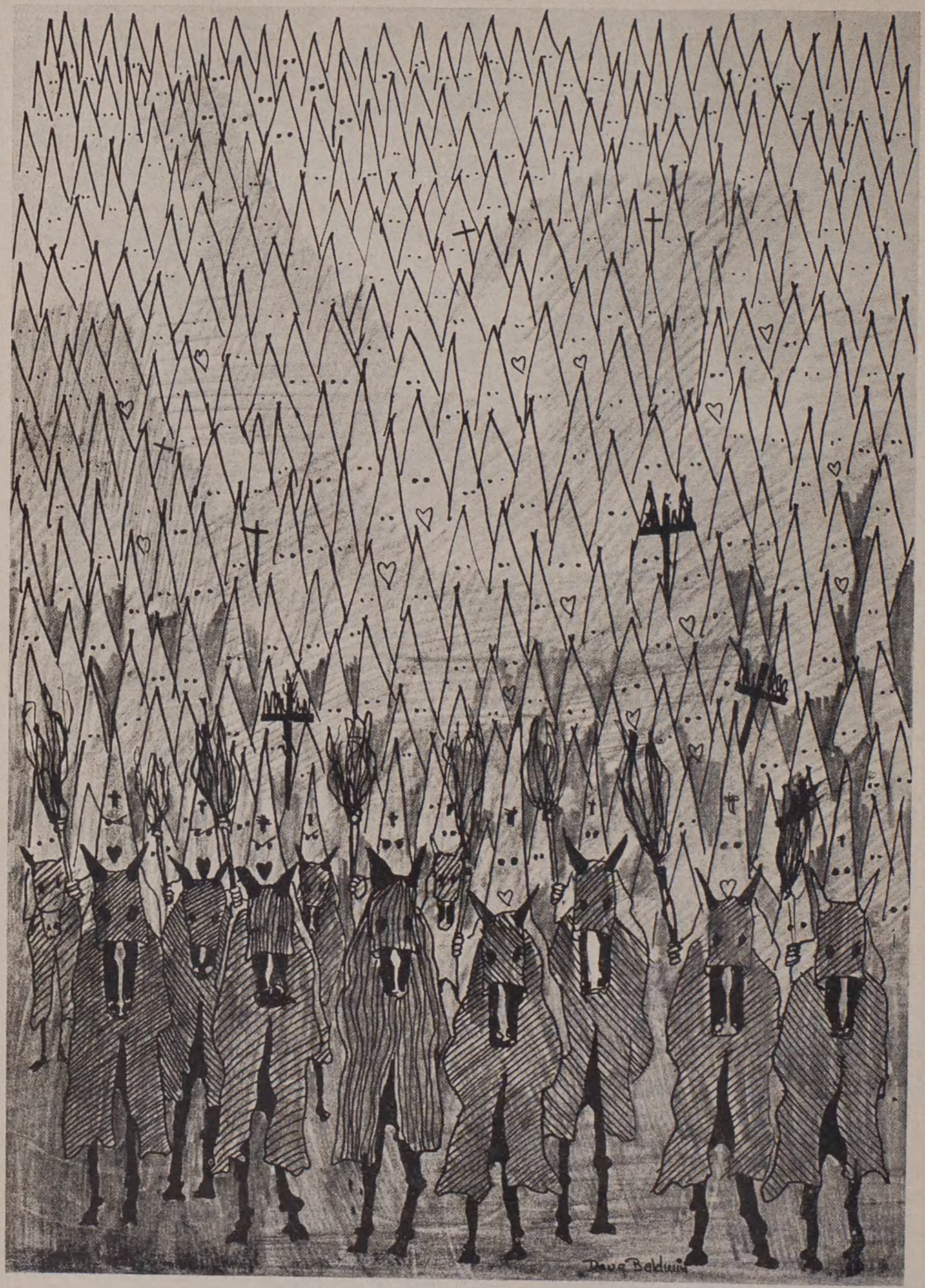

Dave Baldwin

The White Caps

By W. WAYNE OLIVER JR.

Wayne "Tennessee" Oliver is a sophomore forestry major from Blount County, East Tennesseee and a transfer student from the University of Tennessee. The White Caps *is his first contribution to Venture.*

It is believed by some historians that the White Caps were the original forerunners of the Klu Klux Klan. Because of inter-Klan strife, however, the White Caps alienated themselves in the 1920's.

It was in this period that the following episode took place The Big Fight, as it was called, is historical fact.

The dialect found in this story is in no way complete. It is authentic, but to make it complete would be to make it incomprehensible.

W. Wayne Oliver Jr.

That's what they called theirselves then. Now-a-days they've got a fancier handle, the Klu Klux Klan. Ain't much different though. 'Course they've tamed down a mite. Still they're a lawless mob, a raft of no-'counts and yeller cowards that hide their faces. Used to didn't make no bones 'bout that hood bein' a mask. Now the white robe and mask stand fer purity and the red trim fer Christ's Blood. Bull! Thar's still cross-burnin's, tawin's, and lynchin's. Ain't so much outright thievin', and they've quit rapin' women. Now they're fer purity of the race—won't so particular in the old days. They ain't nothin' but yeller stript polecats.

Back in the old days, I lived in a little town way back in the mountain on Little Cane River. Won't many people lived thar, and hit were a right peaceful place. The mountain opened up jist above where the gulf begun, and thar were a right good sized flat. The Old Man Ledbitter owned most of the flat. Down in hit, besides his store and grist mill, was a Church and a few houses. Most folks lived up the hollers, and farmed what flat land they were. Done right well. Everybody were friends, and what with a little of Jessee Myres' corn on a Saturday evenin' we was always happy—fer the most part.

Me and Jane—that's my half sister—won't well to git on. Poppa, he had her afore he married again. Maw, she died a-bearin' me; and thar was jist the three of us.

One day I come in from the mountain—had me a fine mess of squirrels—and thar they was, in the sleepin' room, her and Jessee Myres. Now ol' Jessee won't much. 'Course he made the best corn 'round; but 'side from hit, he were jist shiftless. Jessee, he were down over her jist a-hittin' and a-beatin' as to kill her. Jane, she seen me and went to hollerin' Jessee'd raped her. Won't much else I could've done. I grabbed me the sixteen inch, double eight offin the pegs. Jessee, he rose up and backed to the wall. I checked the loads; his face turned the color of ashes on new snow. My shoulder fitted the stock, and I seen his hair turn white.

"Fer God's sake, don't shoot! Ye don't . . ."

Hit were a comfortable feelin', the stock kickin' back into my shoulder. Jessee's haid kindly jerked. His top half climbed the wall. His lags walked out from under him—like a wrung-neck chicken.

"Murderer!"

Down to Knoxville Town, they helt trial. Poppa, he got up and tole the true of hit—jist like I tole. Jane, she said her and Jessee

was married down to Mar'ville two weeks afore; and when she tole me, I blowed up on 'count of she married a 'shiner. She said I vowed to lay waitin' and kill Jessee, and what I tole was lies.

Reckon as how hit seemed like they was, after the sheriff went to Mar'ville and found out fer true they was married.

"Fer God's sake, don't shoot! Ye don't . . ."

Upshoot of the thing were prison fer me. Five year, and the Judge, he didn't bat an eye. And her a-sittin' right thar a-lyin'.

Bein' like me, free and all, roamin' the mountain as I pleased, prison were hell. Them coal mines near drove me crazy. I'd ken the sunrise, and a whoop-o-will at evenin' time, and young corn a-sproutin'; hit near drove me crazy. Fer five year I never seen the sunrise.

> Well, ye wake up 'fore the daylight
> Ye hear the ding-dong ring
> Ye go a-marchin' to the coal mines
> Hear the damn picks sing!

I laid awake many a night thinkin' of The Midnight Special. But hit never come my way.

Anyways, I'd git a letter from Poppa twiced a month. First they was good letters —'ceptin' fer the very first one. Hit tole of how Jane walked down the street, people'd cross to t'other side—not afore they'd had time to whisper, "Whore," jist loud enough fer her to hear. She left town in two weeks. Never were heered of again—'ceptin' fer oncted. Rankin Ledbitter said he thought he seen her in D-troit a-smokin' under a street lamp, only he won't shore.

I read Poppa's letters. In spring, I seen the mountain bust out white from sourwood. Late summer, I tasted poplar honey. Fall, I heered Big Gray's mouth on b'ar trail. I writ back. Only I never tole him how prison were. He'd been pained enough.

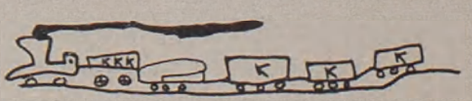
After the first year, his letters won't so good no more. The whole country were afeared. Stock were kilt; crops trampled, and farms were burnt. Men was dragged out of houses and tawed or kilt; and women was the same, only raped too.

Nobody stirred at night, and doors was locked. The sheriff, he locked hisself in jail; and thar he stayed. The White Caps had come.

They might of started out good—I don't rightly know. They was goin' to run out all the 'shiners, no-'counts, and scarlet women. But a mob 'tain't the law, and hit most always goes bad.

All this Poppa writ me, and 'bout John Braidy too. Now John, he were a good God-fearin' man. He worked hard, had a good woman; and they done a good job a-raisin' their youngins. One night, the White Caps rode into John's yard and called him out. The whole family watched while their farm were fired. The men watched the women raped and tawed to death, and then was hung. That got the sheriff outen his jail. Misress Braidy were his sister. He arrested two White Caps; that evenin' late, the rest of the bunch rode in and hung the sheriff.

After that, I didn't hear from Poppa much more; only oncted in a long while, he writ me 'bout his electionin'. He were runnin' fer sheriff. Poppa, he's a man of honor; and he tole folks he'd run them White Caps clean outen the county. Folks knowed he'd try or git kilt.

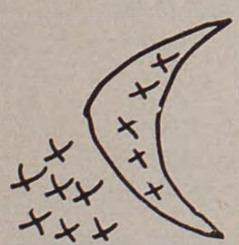


I got home night afore election, and by next noon hit were knowed that Poppa were elected. We loaded up our belongin's and moved to the jail.

Hit were a right pretty spot. The hewed building sot in the mouth of a little holler 'bout half-mile from town. The buildin' were made of chestnut and were railey solid. 'Twere L-shaped and had a slate roof. 'Cross the front was three rooms fer sleepin', cookin', and an office. The cells was in the back. Hit were stone floored; and in the cookin' room, a spring rose up and flowed through the front.

They were a packed dirt yard with hitchin' posts scattered over hit. 'Bout twenty yard in front of the porch were a waterin' trough hewed from an eight, by, thirty foot poplar log.

We moved in, and had jist et when they come. We seen a big light outside and there they was. Wroped up in sheets they sot their hosses, them hoods floppin' 'round in the wind like a Joker on a Bicycle. The torches' light made them sheets look yeller —jist like the men inside them.



"Boy, don't look like I'm a-goin' to have to find 'em; they've done come fer a visit. Lay out the guns, and slide my dynimite case in here."

"Sam Cody! In the Lord's Name, we call ye and yore boy out."

"Damn ye, Marvey Birchfield!"

"So ye know me. Makes no never mind. Yore boy is a killer, and ye sired him! 'THOU SHALT NOT KILL!' Seven score of His Faithful come to do His will!"

"Everything laid out, Poppa. What now?"

"Pray, Nat. Pray and fix to kill some dogs. Marvey! God send ye to hell!"

"Mouth ye not the Lord's Name, sire of a killer! We come to do His Justice. Come out, Sam Cody!"

Poppa picked up two short guns. "Cover me Nat. I'm a-comin'!"

Poppa, he were a proud sight bustin' through the door, hammers fallen'. He stood on the porch lead flowin' through him. He were always a tall man, but I seen him grow a foot taller that evenin'. When he fired number twelve, he fell.

I stepped through the door. The double eights kicked back twiced; hosses bolted, and men screamed. Reckon I were shot then, but I don't ken hit. I dragged Poppa inside; he were daid.

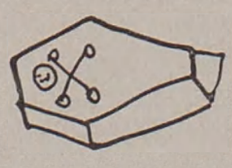
"Come on, ye yeller sons of Satan! Fit!"

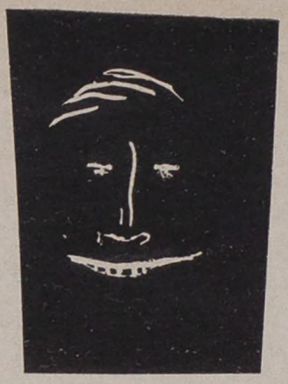
Fast as I could ear and trigger, I shot. Hit didn't stop them. They'd split up and was slippin' 'round through the brush. I looked 'round fer some more cartridges when I seen the dynimite case. I bundled up half-dozen bunches; capped and fused. The fuses burned short; I stepped through the door and let fly.

The whole of creation exploded. Next thing I ken were the ground hittin' my face. When I woke up, I were in bed, wroped in plasters and sech. They tole me they was thirteen bullets dug outen me, and a right smart of buckshot left in. Thirty-three White Caps had lived; thirty of them was hung.

When I stirred, the folks to home wanted me fer sheriff. I couldn't. I had me three dogs to hunt down. They be dead now. Long and slow to pay fer Poppa. Only hit won't enough.

Since then, I've traveled widely as a deputy marshal; I've kilt a many of them. But still decent folks is afeared of them. They're still a yeller no-'count mob. They're still dogs to be sent to hell.





THE

We were sparring around in the basement under the dim yellow of a single, small bulb. It was damp and cool down there, what with Mom's wash hanging on the line, but for some crazy reason Herman had his shirt off. Maybe he thought he was built. I don't know though, except that if anyone had his shirt off, it should have been me. I was only fourteen then, but I was fully, firmly developed—short and heavy in the torso. But it was Herman that was bare-bodied, flailing his long, fat arms at me, sweating and panting. I could smell him, pungent like a dog, when I ducked under a roundhouse, my head coming next to his chest. He was swinging to kill, not that that meant anything. He couldn't touch me and I don't think he'd have done much damage even if he had. Except for his hands, Herman was never very strong. I contented myself with flicking soft, left jabs up to his face at will, just brushing his cheek or his nose, saying, "You swing like a rusty gate, Herman ol' boy," and laughing and laughing. This made him all the madder. He'd say, "I'll fix you—you yellow-bellied coward. Take that. And that." Just like in the movies. He had to punch down at me too, since I was half a foot shorter than he, and that made him look all the more awkward, especially when he'd try to uppercut. His elbow would almost touch the floor. And always there was his unprotected face, red, contorted and almost shining, pushed out at me by the black of the basement—framed. I tried to resist. I really did. I didn't want to hurt him, but I had never knocked anyone out before and this opportunity was just too much. I finally let him have it. Nothing fancy. Just a straight right, hard to the chin, and there wasn't much padding in those gloves. I don't know whether Herman exactly flew through the air or not, but there he was on the floor. He must have hit his head on the cement too, because he was really out.

I don't think I have ever seen Herman so composed before or since. His arms were limp at his sides and he was breathing gently through the mouth. For once there was no knot between his shaggy eyebrows and the ridiculous scarlet of his cheeks had ebbed to a pale rose. But it was very still in the basement then, and I became worried. Suppose his skull was fractured. I ran upstairs and got a glass of water, not knowing what else to do, and poured it on his forehead. From there the water streamed in all directions, bringing him around. After filling the glass again and letting him take the water internally this time, I managed to stand him up and get him going toward the stairs. Mom would raise hell if she found out about this. Herman was still dazed and hadn't said a coherent word yet, when I got him out to the sidewalk and pointed in the direction of his house. He had his shirt on by then, but it was not buttoned or tucked in. I threw his mackinaw over his seemingly boneless shoulders and started him waddling up the block.

That little boxing match pretty well set the tone for my dealings with Herman. The only reason I had anything to do with him at all was because we lived on the same street and therefore walked home from school together—I was spared this, once we were in high school, as then I never came home until late, what with sports and all. But even in high school we were in the same home-room yet, because our last names began with the same letter—G. Gleaseman and Glueker. You can imagine which of us was Glueker. But Herman figured he had to compete with me for some reason, whenever we were thrown together doing something. He even created situations. The boxing match,

FANATIC

By DAVE KUBACH

David Kubach, a senior in creative writing from Beloit, Wisconsin, is this year's editor of Venture. Mr. Kubach's story The Almost Disciple *appeared in the Fall, 1958 Venture.*

for instance, was his idea and he wouldn't take no for an answer. And, of course, he would inevitably come out second best if such a close comparison can even be made—and then, damn it, he wouldn't accept the fact. He nagged and harassed me for an entire week after I had cold-decked him. "C'mon, Carl," he'd say, shuffling and shadow-boxing along beside me, on the way home from junior high school. "Let's have another go at it. What'sa matter? You chicken to take me on again?" Chicken! Why it would've been premeditated murder if I had. But still Herman stood for half an hour in our drive-way—after I had refused to fight him again all week long—shaking his big fist at the window, so angry and frustrated that he was bawling. "Come out, you yellow-belly. Come out and fight like a man." I could hear his mad voice even in the attic. My mother put a stop to it finally, telling him she'd call the cops.

Herman's biggest trouble was that he simply refused to realize his limitations, which were, unfortunately, numerous. For instance, during our sophomore year Herman went out for the basketball team. True, Herman had learned the initial movements of the game, but that was as far as it went, although I know he practiced nightly in front of the hoop on the Glueker garage. Before the first cuts of those out for the team had been made, we were doing a little drill. There were two lines of us facing each other from opposite ends of the slippery, newly waxed floor. The idea was for one guy to dribble up the court and try to score past a guy from the other line, who was defending the basket. When there were only three ahead of me, I saw Herman step from the back of the defending line and look searchingly up the floor. Then he walked up a ways and elbowed his way in toward the head of his line. I swore. Sure enough, when my turn came there he was,

his hair in his eyes and his thick legs wide apart under the basket. His arm was extended, palm out—a classic stance. And I think he was still standing that way when the ball rang through the hoop. I had flowed around him like liquid, not even bothering to fake. He must have froze in that position. But yet he ran up to me in his jerky little strides, shouting, "Fine shot,

Carl. You really drove for that one." And insisted on almost breaking my hand. As I said, Herman had very strong hands .

Four times in a row Herman managed to be the one to guard me and, as it turned out, I was the one to guard him, which was ridiculous. He'd lose control of the ball and have to chase it three or four times in the course of bringing it up the floor. Then when he finally got to me, I'd knock the ball away from him without even stirring from the spot. I did this twice. The third time I rested my hands on my hips and said, "Oh hell. Take a shot." But he wouldn't then. He stood in front of me glaring and bouncing the ball chest-high like a little boy, snarling, "Guard me. Guard me, damn you." So I hit the ball with my fist, sending it the length of the court.

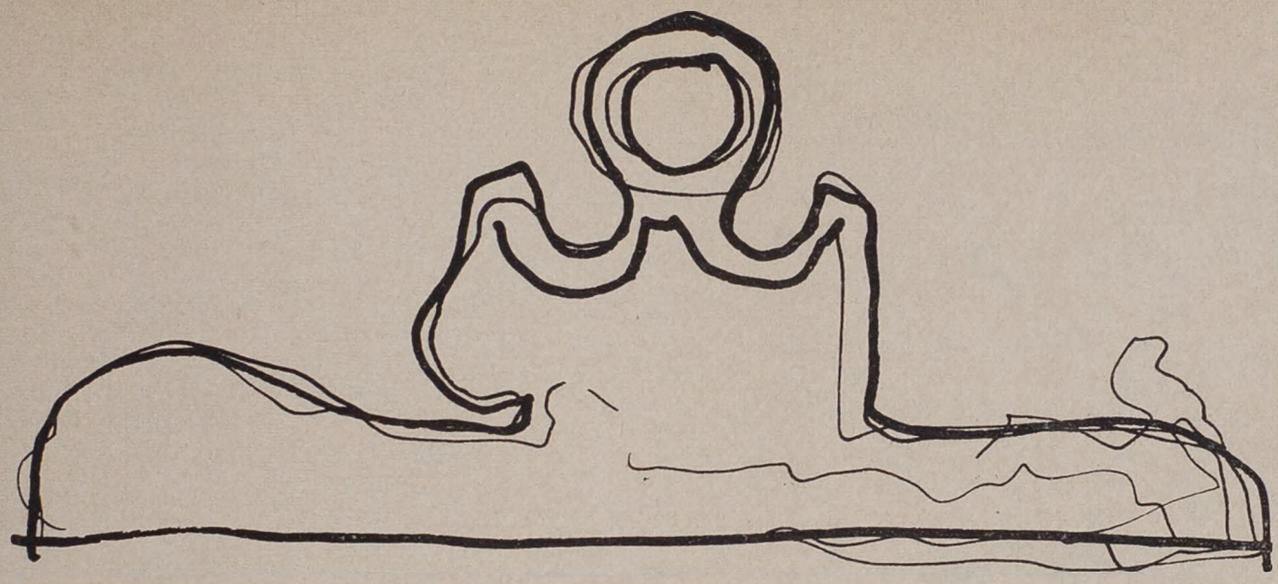
All this began to amuse the others and annoy me. As I'd dribble up the court, they'd shout, "Hey, hey, Gleaseman, Glueker's out for you. Hey, hey. Watch out. Go get 'im, Glueker." I gave them the finger which amused them even more. The great Gleaseman being bugged by Glueker. On my fourth time up the floor with the ball, Herman could stand it no longer. He threw a body-block into me as I went around him, spilling us both on the abrasive floor. The coach had to pull me off him.

And in class, there was Herman too, hulking in his seat, trying oh so hard to keep his great length straight up in the seat and maintain an intent look on his face. But he couldn't discipline his mind anymore than he could his body—discipline's the thing. In algebra and geometry, he was pathetic. He would stutter and stammer to a question until the teacher called on someone else. But after we'd get a test back, Herman would corner me after class and say, "Well. How'd you do, Gleaseman?" "Oh, pretty well," I'd answer. "How well," he'd demand. "Oh, a ninety-seven or so," I'd reply to cut this nonsense short. "I got a ninety-eight," he'd say and stomp off. It was unbelievable. He wasn't really lying, I don't think. He just thought that if he said something wasn't so, it wasn't so.

Even in English—not exactly my best subject either—Herman was hopeless. I, at least, knew that Mark Antony wasn't the good guy in *Julius Caesar*. But after that "Friends ,Romans, countrymen" spiel, Herman was so furious that he called Brutus a bastard out loud in class, getting himself kicked out, consequently. Passion! That boy was one big ball of passion, and maybe it was the only thing that protected him from reality, if such a thing existed for him. Reality might be tough for Herman to take. But on the other hand, it ruined any sense of proportion or good sense that he might accidently have had. Now why should somebody as clumsy as Herman go out for basketball? There were others as weak and awkward as he. There was Timmy O'Bannion —short, beer-bellied, round-headed Timmy O'Bannion. He didn't go out for basketball. Once he had to wrestle John Kalpinski in gym class because they were both the same weight. Little John was an All-state end on the football team, and nothing but shoulders and swelling arms. Timmy'd have gotten himself killed if he'd have tried to wrestle Kalpinski seriously. So Timmy just went out on the mat and asked John to dance with him. They waltzed around the mat for a minute or so, and then Timmy flopped down on his back, stuck his feet and arms straight up in the air dead-dog fashion, shouting that he was pinned. Everybody got a big laugh and Timmy didn't lose anything by it. It was too damn bad Herman didn't take lessons from O'Bannion. All O'Bannion could be was a clown and that he was, for all he was worth. He wasn't smart in class either, so he made a joke of it. No matter what Mr. Carlson asked him in geometry, Timmy would say, "Two and two make four and no more," which invariably got him thrown out, but he invariably got sent back. Mr. Carlson finally stopped calling on him altogether and coldly flunked him. O'Bannion didn't care. He wasn't going anywhere except to the Iron Works. He knew his limitations.

Where was Herman Glueker going? Not anywhere that I could see, but he just didn't seem to accept the fact that heredity had not been good to him and live with it. No, Herman went out for every sport, shot his mouth off continually in class, and was sort of a fanatic at random. He was even a greater clown than O'Bannion whether he liked it or not, because of his deadly seriousness in everything he so fumblingly did. And in the end this unintentional ability of Herman's

(Cont. on Page 20)



Coffee and Comments

By ALAN GODDARD

Alan Goddard, a senior in English from Butte, here reviews the foreign film series, and has contributed the poem on page 25.

I was hypnotized at an early age by matinees and popcorn. Since then I feel I have come a long way, but movies have not. Still there is a refuge for movie enthusiasts in the foreign film theaters; and, in this city, there is one sponsored by a film society. At intermission a little wide eyed over free coffee we think and talk movies with Italian inspired cigarette-gesturing hands. I am a card carying member in this society ,and I feel I have the right to criticize it and its fall program, by gar.

I should confess that I had seen, with the exception of *Rice*, most of the fall series more than a year ago. These are second thoughts about the fall selections we have been offered.

Smiles of a Summer Night is billed as a Swedish version of a French boudoir comedy; however, it is neither a comedy nor very French, although the boudoir was present and kind of fun. This film has won prizes and international acclaim for its obviously gifted director, Ingmar Bergman; and because of Bergman's immense popularity with the slick magazines (vide: Time, and The New Yorker) it is perhaps the one of two movies which merits close scrutiny in the fall series. To begin with the film is beautifully played by a handsome cast. It has been photographed with a sort of Lee Nye loving care (you know; reflections in pools, low key shadows, etc.) and has a witty musical score, (i.e. in the scene where the lawyer, Frederick Egermann, which translates, I am told, as "eager man", is napping alongside his virgin wife, he enacts in his sleep a pleading seduction of a mistress as the sound track tinkles with *Liebestram.)* But the gloss of the production would have to be secondary in any consideration of the work of a man who has made the startling, somber and original films, *The Seventh Seal, Wild Strawberries* and *The Magician.* The Swedish idyll is the *sommerlark,* and Bergman has repeatedly used this background, as well as the theatrical atmosphere (i.e. *The Naked Night, One Summer of Happiness.)* So when these devices reappear in *Smiles of a Summer Night* both the audience and Bergman are expected to treat it with a loving and even sardonic familiarity. Even the obvious symbolism, the night larking romances, the choric old woman who makes the inevitable remarks about the shortness of love and life, the obvious cross section of society chosen for examination—the lawyer, the cleric, the soldier-aristocrat, the virgin, the actress-artist, etc.—are reminiscent of earlier films. Still Bergman's film is absorbing entertainment, and possibly the only

(Cont. on Page 23)

Central Avenue--
Los Angeles

By BARBARA KNIGHT

Barbara Knight is a graduate student in English from Billings. As an undergraduate, Miss Knight was a frequent contributor to Venture and was the winner of two Sterns short story awards.

Out of Aztec's and Egypt's land,
Dashed out and dropt here,
A new-dashed land to wait—
Beaten sterling and metal links,
The shaking rhythm of dry seed pods
inflamed the host.
When metallic conquerors came,
The gleamed sheath of rose-gold
Coruscated in the sun;
same sun that supped on dried rust blood,
staining the altar stone.

The red-legged Mayan had a pit
built stone on stone.
The bloodless, sacrificed, embargoed
to vicious hell's points
were mortared there, so even stone
was fit to last till now.

The silent bodies, shaking
in cat-maned headresses,
gleaned, oiled, and leathered
by another sun,
Could only stalk the clan of cats.
Lion-clan, gazelle, and dingo,
The pennants, clustered
in the broken-footed,
searing, clearing by banyan trees
and stunt bananas;
A camporee, where
wattled women stooped,
swept back the edge of growth, and,
packing babies
on their backs,
ground scarlet grasses
into mash.

A forge, coaxed by wads of glowing grass
sun-dried, curling at the edges,
belches out into young Moses' hands,
forging liquid metal bands
blue-white and luring:
"This will be a plow share,
and this, a spear."

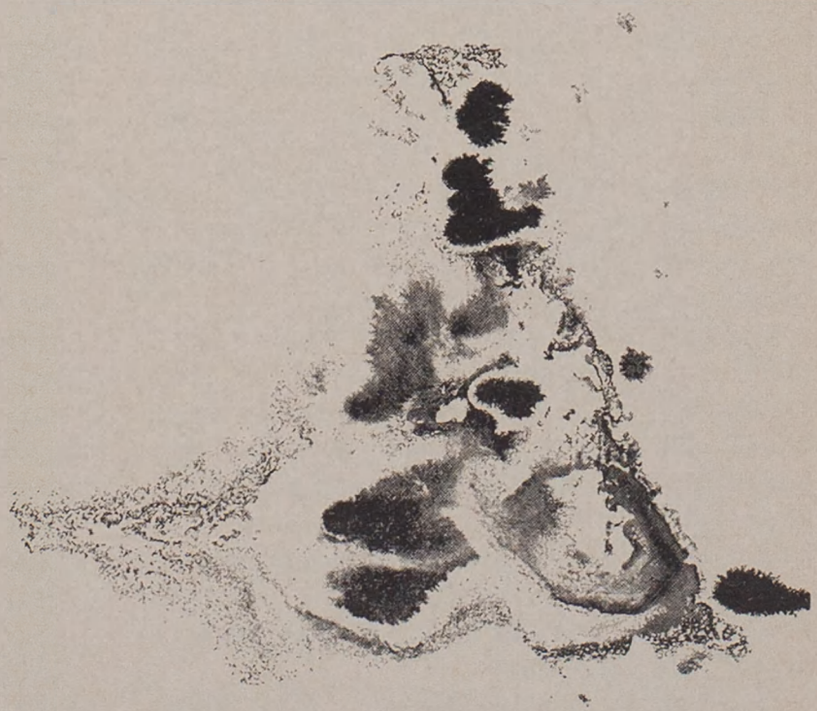
His feet, soldered sole to knee
with speed
have shaken excess apart.
The knee, thigh-high in any man
is muscled stealth
to press bare feet
sprung from the springy turf.
Steaming wood, orchid dependable
to his wet chest,
designed in chalk, wood ashes,
blunted blues against skin black,
and enough reds, stolen
from the pool-caught sun.
Now seven lengths of him
against the sky bright
flung in one slight leap
suspended there:
The girdle of his loin
all beaded-seed
and wild grass ropes
and slung
beneath his quiver
rattling against his shoulders.

The cross, his arms,
rift with split iron
created, is duplicted
and trembles off in dark.
Birds call from 50 feet above.

By now the crying cousins
tied and buckled at the breasts
are falling into sieves
of whimpering dreams.
The night is open
and the beasts call, crawling,
into their time.

We are reminded
city streets are quieting;
a sleepy dove pouts, cluckily,
at Jack and Isabel,
a rolling boll of flesh,
black to black
in his banded thighs.

On the newspaper corner,
between drugstore and liquor dispensary,
The wobbling Mexican
supports his reeling neck
by hand.



By CAROLINE CONKLIN

SIMPLY

Simply Lateral is Carol Conklin's debut in Venture. Mrs. Conklin is a graduate of Radcliffe and is at present an extension student at MSU.

The week began like any other, with Madeline taking her dirty clothes to the laundromat before going to work. Even later, on the subway, she felt no premonitions as she reviewed the week's schedule. If anything, it was more depressing than usual. She had only two dates, one on Tuesday with Leon whom she never wanted to see again, and one on Friday with Edward who would probably never want to see her again. Of course, two last dates meant asking her question two times in a row, which was nice, but still Madeline had an empty feeling in the pit of her stomach. She decided to buy a donut on the way to the office.

Although the office where Madeline worked lay in the very shadow of the Empire State Building, not once in the three years she had been there had Madeline looked up beyond the sixth floor, and she probably never would. It hadn't been her idea to come to New York in the first place. It was her mother who had bought the train ticket on the day Madeline finally received her high school diploma. "New York will be broadening for you," Mrs. Mead had said. "You'll want to stay a long time."

Madeline nodded and said, "Yes, mother," Most people nodded and said yes to Mrs. Mead, who had aqua hair, a baritone voice which she used a great deal, and who was generally running for public office. Madeline, on the other hand, had pale blond hair, a thin voice which she used seldom, and she never ran for anything. People imagined she took after her father, but no one remembered. He had died.

Two days after graduation, Mrs. Mead drove Madeline to the station at Indianapolis. It meant giving up a Young Democrats meeting, but Mrs. Mead took pride in never letting political duties interfere with parental. She led Madeline through the crowd, placed her largest suitcase crossways in front of the gate leading to the track, and sat down on it. "You can get a job typing," she said. "Sit down, there's plenty of room. Find an apartment in the East Seventies. Live by yourself. Roommates never pay their share and are always in the bathroom when you want it. Write once a week."

"Yes, Mother."

Just then the train was announced, and the gate opened. Mrs. Mead gripped both Madeline's hands in her own. Madeline winced. "You must be very careful," Mrs. Mead said loudly. "New York men can't be trusted. Your father was a New York man." Madeline would have liked to know more about that, but her mother went right on. "They have clever ways of deceiving attractive girls like you."

"Mother," Madeline said shyly. "People can't get on the train until we move. Besides, I'm not attractive."

"Nonsense. There's plenty of time, and every woman under thirty is attractive. Now do you remember what I've told you about, you know?"

Madeline did remember, but Mrs. Mead repeated it anyway, word for word, just the way she had said it on Madeline's thirteenth birthday and every six months or so thereafter. Madeline listened carefully, as did all the other people waiting to get on the train. "And worse things than that can happen," Mrs. Mead said finally. She stood up. "Goodbye, dear. Open a bank account immediately."

While for most girls a move to New York City from Janesville, Indiana, at the age of nineteen is a big step up, for Madeline the move had been simply lateral. Her first impression was that Grand Central Station was smaller than she had expected, and all her

LATERAL

other impressions were along the same line. After the excitement of getting a job typing, finding an apartment in the East Seventies, and opening a bank account were over, Madeline found she was as bored as she had been back home. She didn't like books or plays or concerts, she didn't even like magazines, movies, or popular songs, and so she did the only thing left to her. She went out with men.

It was fairly easy, once she got started. Men liked her, especially the clever, garrulous ones, because she had no pretensions to cleverness and nothing to say. Nor did she want to get married. The best part from Madeline's point of view was that there was plenty of turnover and variety. For, thanks to Mrs. Mead, just as Madeline was beginning to tire of a man, he would tire of her. Nothing could have been more satisfactory, she knew, but still, as each affair ended, she was left with a tiny, hardly noticeable feeling of loss, the same feeling she got when she passed up a bargain dress as unsuitable only to have the woman behind her take it instead.

In spite of that, Madeline liked last dates best because it was on last dates that she asked her question. The question had occurred to her when she was fourteen and dating for the first time. A pudgy boy of fifteen had rescued the evening by producing from the trunk of his father's car a six-pack of Budweiser. It was her first beer, her first liquor of any kind, and as they sat in the back seat drinking it, Madeline began to feel happy. By the third can she felt almost elated. Suddenly she leaned forward, put her hand on the boy's knee, looked into his eyes and said, "Don't you think life is a merry-go-round ride?"

But Madeline was adamant. Once the question was asked and answered, that was the

end. She didn't know what answer she was waiting for; she only knew she hadn't heard it yet. True, the answers were more interesting than they had been at first. High school boys tended to say, "Well, gee, I never thought of it that way. Maybe that's right." Older men said things like, "You mean because you can't get off until it stops?" or "Futility."

For her date with Leon on Tuesday, Madeline chose a blue cotton with a Mandarin collar and long sleeves. Leon was an artist who accepted checks from his mother in Philadelphia because the public wasn't ready for his stuff, and who lived on 14th Street because the Bohemians in the Village made him nervous. He had a tall thin head with waves of red hair which made it look taller, and green, shadowy eyes. He alternately puzzled, frightened, and bored Madeline; she was very glad it was almost over.

When she opened the door to him, he swooped to kiss her hand and said, "Ah, blue for purity. My lily maid, you look ravishing. Let's go to my apartment."

He talked to her all the way down Fifth Avenue, but from where she sat in the side car of his motorcycle, she couldn't hear a thing he said. It didn't matter very much; she never understood him anyway.

She was disappointed when she saw the apartment, and wondered if Leon had moved in yet. The walls were black, the pillows on the floor were black, the bed was white, and there was nothing else in the room except an easel and some paintings. Leon bowed her in. "Sit down," he said. "Anywhere."

Madeline hesitated. Sitting on the bed was unladylike, but so was sitting on the floor. She sat on the bed, crossing her legs, and then uncrossing them because Leon was sitting on a pillow facing her. "You are like an early Flemish," he said.

Madeline didn't bother to answer. She was looking more closely at the paintings. They were all women with napkins in the laps and odd smiles on their faces. Madeline blushed. Leon smiled. "My flower," he said, "Do you know the Rubaiyat?" When she shook her head, he took a thin book from a pile in the corner and began to read. He had a rhythmical voice.

She must have dozed off, because suddenly it was dark. "It's dark," she said. Leon stopped reading, got three candles, spread them out in front of Madeline, lit them, and sat down again. His eyes glowed. She wondered if she ought to leave.

When Leon began squinting and moving his thumb back and forth at her, Madeline stood up quickly and started for the door. "No, no," Leon said. "You misunderstand. Madeline, my pale dream, I must paint you."

Madeline sat down again. He held out his hands to her. "I'm burning, aching to paint you," he said. "If I could but paint you, my life would be complete."

Madeline looked around the room at the pictures. "No," she said.

"I warn you," Leon said. "Until I paint you, I shall not lift my brushes."

Madeline pointed to one of the women. "Like that?" she said.

Leon looked offended. "Of course."

"No."

He buried his face in his hands. She felt terribly mean, but what else could she do? She leaned down and put her hand on Leon's shoulder. "Don't you think life is a merry-go-round ride?"

In one motion he was on his feet, hands high in the air. "Yes! Yes!" he shouted, so loudly that she was afraid for the neighbors. "Life is a gay, mindless whirl of excitement! A blurred panorama of color and music!" He bent toward her, just missing a candle. "A mad, dizzying round of happiness! We must jump on now, before it is too late!"

"I think I better go home," Madeline said.

Leon straightened up slowly. Then he smiled, which she hadn't expected. "Of course, my sleeping beauty," he said quietly. "I shall take you home to dream of painted horses." He sang all the way to her apartment, and when she told him she would never see him again, he simply kissed her hand and smiled once more.

Madeline didn't feel at all happy about any of it, and slept poorly for two nights in a row. In one sense she was glad it was over. She had never been able to write to her mother about Leon, and now she wouldn't have to. Edward, now, whom she was to see on Friday, Edward was easy to write home about. He was neat, hardworking, ambitious, even handsome in a sleek sort of way, and already a vice president. For Edward she wore white taffeta with a Peter Pan collar and three-quarter length sleeves.

(Cont. on Page 26)

The Interrogator

Mary Clearman, who is making her second appearance in Venture, is a senior in creative writing.

By MARY CLEARMAN

The room had been silent for sixty seconds, and the only sound was of a fly shopping up and down the dusty window pane. The window was shut tight, perhaps never had been opened, and the fly buzzed hopelessly, hunting a way out.

Jim Barelman, restless and uncomfortable in his blue serge, sat behind the flat-topped oak desk and carefully lined up the half-dozen pencils before him; first so that their neatly sharpened points were in line, and then shifting all the uneven lengths so that the eraser ends matched. He considered the neat file of pencils, and chafed in the heavy serge.

He was going to have to do something.

The boy, Mike, sat before Jim on a straight modern chair. His eyes were on his hands, clenched together between his knees, but he was looking at nothing at all. He was a medium-sized boy for sixteen, very narrow in the hips and not yet very broad in the shoulders, and he wore blue jeans and a soft cotton shirt with the cuffs turned up. The room was airless, and tiny wet beads were gathering along the line where his dark brown hair left his forehead. He sat very still, only the tiny muscles in his cheeks moving just a little. The moisture was letting his hair fall into soft waves.

Jim Barelman was irritated by the waves in the boy's hair. He looked at the healthy young body, at the contours of the back, outlined under the limp shirt, and the shape of the slim, hard legs. Briefly he looked at the boy's brown, tapering hands with the fine hairs on the back and along the fingers, and coughed abruptly, guiltily feeling the developing burn at the back of his neck.

His wrist watch, lying on the desk in front of him, said two o'clock. There were four hours remaining, four hours left to find Bonnie. He thought of Bonnie, who had lived in the big house on the corner during the six years since he had come to town and taken a basement apartment on the same block. Five of those years he had been interviewing kids in his hot, dusty office at the police station, slicing their privacy open for their own good and filing it methodically away, always detached from them. Now, caught between his thoughts of Bonnie, with her silver blonde pony tail and blue eyes set uncompromisingly in her determined face, and the emotions that this grim, silent boy had set simmering, he was becoming further enmeshed in his own anger.

He would start again. He must not be angry.

"Mike." His voice was harsh as it ended the silence. He coughed, trying again. "Let's have it, Mike. Get this thing over with."

Mike said nothing. His eyes left his hands and rose to Jim's. He had wide gray eyes,

almost transparent, heavily fringed with silken dark lashes, beautiful eyes, odd in the boy's brown face. Jim swallowed. "Mike—"

Suddenly he was furious at the silent boy, at the passing time. He stood up, viciously jerking aside his chair. Dust puffed up briefly from the unswept floor. "Maybe you think you're being—being coy, maybe." He stalked across to the window, turned abruptly back. "Real funny, a seven-state alarm out for those kids, while you sit here flirting with the cops!"

He stopped. The boy's eyes were again fixed on his clenched hands, and the muscles of his back showed tense through his shirt.

"Mike," he said placatingly.

Mike looked up at him, and Jim took an involuntary step backward under the force of the gray eyes. "Listen," Mike said. "Everything I've got to say, it's in your folder there."

Jim rubbed at his chin, feeling the roughness of the unaccustomed stubble. This morning was the first that he had missed shaving since—he couldn't remember. He let his hand fall. "You want to know what's in that folder?" he asked Mike. He walked over to the desk, sat down, and pulled open one of the half-dozen manila folders that lay in a stack. "Where did Bonnie and John go? You don't know. Why did they leave? You don't know. Where were you when they left? Out hunting ducks by yourself. How were things between you and Bonnie? They were okay. Was she mad at you? You don't remember." He shut the folder. "How much do you think that leaves us to go on?"

The boy stretched in the hard wooden chair. His leg muscles stood taut for a second, hard under his blue jeans, then relaxed. "I don't know anything more about it." The edge in his voice was completely controlled. "Does that satisfy you, or are you going to sit here in this oven the rest of the day, kidding yourself?"

"We're not kidding ourselves," Jim said, carefully using the safe plural.

"Aren't you?"

"Bonnie and John have been gone for forty-four hours. At six o'clock this evening the Mann Act goes into effect. We're not kidding ourselves, but how about you?" He paused, regaining some of the professional technique that had been lost in anger, and said softly, "You can be prosecuted as an accomplice, you know, Mike."

Mike smiled. It was an odd smile, starting by curving his thin, hard lips humorlessly, and then moving bitterly into his wide gray eyes. Jim's throat thickened. His poise slipped away.

"Want me to spell it?" he said harshly. "Bonnie was your girl. John was your buddy. What made them run off together?"

"I told you all about that," Mike said. A faint grate had moved into his voice, and he had withdrawn behind his finely shaded eyes. "Bonnie's mother was giving her a bad time. John'd do anything for kicks."

"Bonnie's mother doesn't seem to know of any trouble," Jim said. "Come on kid. Why'd they leave? You and John have something on her?"

Mike was angry then, without warning. "How the hell well did you know Johnny? Or Bonnie? You see Bonnie walking to school every day, you think she's a cute kid. You got him figured for the villain, because he's got sideburns and gets picked up for speeding every so often." His voice dropped. Jim was spellbound by the tone of his voice, too absorbed to note the application of his own techniques. "Did you ever see Bonnie when things didn't go her way? Ever see how she made people jump when she got an idea about something?"

Jim listened to him, hardly hearing the words, but seeing a blurred picture of little girls jumping rope, a quarrel, and fierce, uncompromising blue eyes.

He jerked away, taking a step back from Mike. "Your girl," he said roughly. He looked at the slim brown hands, pictured them enclasped with Bonnie's square white ones, and felt revulsion swelling up. "What made Bonnie Richardson want to go out with you?"

He saw the hurt in Mike's eyes, and saw it change to disgust, as if the boy was seeing through him, seeing what he himself could not see. He felt uncomfortable.

There was a knock on the door, and Jim pulled his gaze from the boy's slim, hard body. "Come in."

A woman was waved in by a policeman in uniform, who nodded at Jim and departed silently, closing the door behind him. Jim, pulling a second wooden chair, mate to

(Cont. on Page 27)

POEMS

By JOSH KERN

Mr. Kern, a mathematics major from Missoula, has not published before in Venture.

Two

Two stars
In the lonely blue-gray
Sad without two

Reflections

Two nuns
Standing—motionless forever—
Black against windows
Infinite thoughts

Night

Through bleak grey tin can alleys,
over the pitted dirt side streets
into profound little known sections
where gay underage parties take over;
the too sweet taste of rum and lips
girls there against mothers wishes
all dark spots filled with deep
    transcendent love making of
    high school days,
party rages madly on into the moist
    grey air of dawn
where birds and crickets and sad
    frogs make love,
even after the party.

Charles W. Dolson, a special student from Glasgow, makes his first contribution to Venture with this issue.

THI

This town doesn't look too bad, there are plenty of bars. The whole damn street is lined with them. Better than the burg we just left—talk about a nine o'clock town. I don't mind a new town. It's just the first few days before you get to know some of the people. This bar looks as good as any. I think I'll go in and have a couple of drinks while I figure out what to do for the evening. The Mint, real original, only 10,000 of them. If I ever open a bar I'll name . . .

This business of being advance man is all right, not much work to do, but it sure gets lonely at times. They ought to have two advance men—damn company.

"Huh, yeah bring me a beer."

"Oh any kind as long as it's spelled with two e's."

I don't know what's wrong with these damn bartenders! They never seem to get the point. You got to be a wit and entertain people if you ever want to get anyplace as a bartender. By God, that's the way my bartenders would be if I owned a bar—fast. I'd make them hop, and I know how to do it too. I know how to handle people all right. I've been around them long enough.

Same old barroom scene; juke box in the corner (Don't s'pose there are any good records on it), booths lining the wall with a drunk sleeping it off in one of them, brass spittoons all over the place, and the damned stuffed heads on the wall. Deer, elk, moose, antelope, and all kinds of birds. The whole damn lot of them look like they got fleas. Those damn glass eyes with dust on the eyelashes. They should fix it up so that you just pull a string and the whole damn works would blink.

"Hey you! Bring me another beer and bring me a shot of whisky to go with it."

"That's better."

Ink Drawing by Robin Rand

If I opened a bar there wouldn't be any of those damn heads in it. I might open a bar some day too. Hell, I'm not going to stick with this job all my life. If a man saved up his money for a few years he could buy himself a damn nice little bar. There's a lot of money in a bar. I ought to know. I been around.

"Hey! Bring me another drink and none of that cheap bar whiskey either."

ADVANCE MAN

By CHARLES W. DOLSON

"That's all right, Mack, I'm kind of choosey is all."

By God, when the rest of the crew gets to town these people will be quick enough to give us service. All of them trying to get our trade—smilin' and carryin' on. Damn local people don't know what money is. These people got a lot to learn. I've drank more whiskey than that punk has ever poured. We'll show them! We're a damn good crew and we've worked together a long time. This company would have hell firing me—hell, they couldn't do it—I've been with them a long time. There'd be some hell raised, you can bet on that if they ever tried to get rid of me.

'Hey bartender, bring me another drink. I got enough dirt in my throat to make a dirt moving contract!"

"Yeah, the streets are a little dusty all right."

The people sure don't start to drink very early in this town. There's hardly anyone in here even. Haw, not like Frisco—those were the days. You can't beat that old Army life. That's where you really got friends that stick by you. I had it made there—didn't have anything to do but sit around. Hell, the Captain used to come to me when he had a problem. All the babes used to cluster around me in the bars. I'd reinlist now if I thought they'd take me. I should have never left the Army.

"Yeah, I'll take another drink."

"On the house! Well, thanks!"

"Yeah, I'm with the construction company that's moving into town in about a week."

"Well, thanks! It's good to be here."

How about that! They know who I am all right. By God, this guy is all right. I think I'll drink here from now on. That's the way I'd run a bar if I owned one. Treat the working man right would be my motto. These small town people are all right. I came from a small town myself a long time ago and I understand the damn people. Of course, that was a long time ago and I've changed, but I understand them.

"Hey buddy, bring me another shot."

"Thanks, pal."

This would be a good town to start a bar in. I'd just buy this guy out and fix the place up and throw out the damn heads. Those damn heads staring down on me drive me nuts. I'd call it The Working Man's Rest. How's that for a name?

"No, I didn't say anything—just thinking to myself. But as long as you're here you might as well bring me a drink."

Damn punk, trying to nose into my affairs. I should have slugged him. He'll be working for me someday. Sure, I could build the thing right now. I've got a lot of pull with the company. Been working for them thirteen years! They'll give me anything I want. Boy, I'll fix this place up right. There won't be any drunks in my bar. Nothin' but the best people in white shirts and neckties and they'll be buying nothing but the best drinks and I'll be standing up there smilin' and if anyone gets drunk we'll throw them out on their damn cans, but good. I'll have pretzels on the bar in fancy bowls.

"Hey bartender, why don't you have pretzels?"

"Not in a damn sack for a damn dime! I mean on the bar, free!"

God, he doesn't even know how to run a bar. Standing there with his damn eyes bugging out. He never even blinks.

"Gimmey my change! I got more important things to do than sit here."

The Fanatic . . .

(Cont. from Page 8)

brought him a kind of recognition from the entire high school.

As I said before, Herman and I were in the same home-room. During the last six weeks of our junior year, each home-room had to nominate one candidate to run for the student council presidency and some of the goof-offs in our room thought it would be a fine joke to nominate Herman Glueker. You should have seen his face when they did. His mouth shot up to his low-hanging ear lobes, although his eyes remained fixed on the floor. I was nominated too, and won of course, since on the whole our home-room was fairly sensible. But those goof-offs carried their joke off anyway. They started a write-in campaign for Herman in the primary election, getting as his manager Timmy O'Bannion to make the farce complete. Now how could Herman take this all seriously? But there he was, charging madly about the halls, swooping down on clusters of three and four, his long arms outspread, to encircle them and ask them what they wanted done if he got elected president of the student council. As if there was a choice, even. All the while, O'Bannion would be bouncing around, pushing his belly out and shouting, "Gleaseman and Glueker. Here's to Herman . . . Herman and hootch." And somehow Herman made it through the primary to the final election. It was ridiculous. Everybody knew that. But still he had three hundred ridiculous votes which were enough.

There was an all-school assembly on the day before the final election, during which all six of the remaining candidates had to address the student body. I was to be the last to speak, being an old hand at such amateurish intriguings, and Herman was the first. Standing at the back of the up-sloping auditorium, I watched Herman stride, rigid, with his chin held high and his adam's-apple far out, to the center of the small, brightly lit stage. He was wearing some kind of grey suit that hung on him like a rumpled tent and a painfully bright, painted tie. Herman faced the crowd and adjusted his tie, then clenched his bulbous fists and rammed them in the pockets of his pleated pants. That brought a laugh right away, along with such comments as, "What you digging for, Herman" . . . and . . . "Don't bother him. He's got a game going." Those jokesters had thrown him to the lions ,and were probably the worst of the lions themselves. Anyway, I could see O'Bannion's fat face positively transfigured with merriment—like a satyr or something. Herman's first words sounded above the vibrating undertone of the audience . . . "If I am elected . . . If I am . . ." From this fine beginning, he went on to promise them the sky—the privilege to smoke on the school grounds, longer pep rallies during schooltime, Stan Kenton for the spring prom, and a louder, stronger student council voice in the management of school affairs, each in rapid-fire succession. He pulled his hands from his pockets and hurled them through the air, driving each fat promise home like a nail, and his voice kept rising, rising, but only managed to keep a bare pitch above the equally increasing sound of the crowd. Herman was really trying to please those animals, maybe even believed for awhile that he was. What was surprising was that I learned from Herman's performance. He had only been up there a minute when it dawned on me. Appeal to their reason. That would flatter them more than anything, not to mention the faculty. Out of courtesy and amusement, I stayed to the bitter, bloody end of Herman's speech. It was a contest between a single voice and that of fifteen hundred. Arms were arcing and bright pennies shot ringing onto the stage, and Herman's voice reached higher and higher until it shattered like brittle glass. The last words which I heard distinctly were, "Friends, Romans, Countrymen." He broke completely a few seconds later and ran from the stage just as the

THE
MONTANA
POWER
COMPANY

hulking figure of the principal, Mr. Huit, mounted it from the other side.

By the time my turn came to speak, my fellow students were pretty well drained and ready to listen. I felt perfectly at ease and quite presentable in my new, charcoal-black suit which matched the color of my crew-cut hair perfectly. And just before I opened my mouth, I had another really fine brainstorm—that of giving them hell. "You ought to be ashamed of yourselves," I said loudly. "You really ought to be. Is that how you treat a fellow student—one who has as much right to be heard as anyone else? How would you—as individuals—like to be treated in such a manner?" Then I paused for a full minute and gave them the benefit of a hard masterful glare. I could see Mr. Huit, smiling and nodding at the rear exit. "I am not going to promise you anything," I went on crisply, "except to say that I will do the job to the best of my ability. And let's get a few things straight from the beginning. I believe that we are here—first and foremost—to learn, to prepare ourselves to cope with our futures in later life, and that everything else—sports, dances, even the student council—is of secondary importance. We must be students first!" They'd have laughed here, had it been anyone but me in front of them. And I pushed this freedom of being me even a little further, saying, "It is about time we cleaned things up around here and acted with a little dignity," referring, of course, to the old issues around our school—necking in the corridors, smoking in the johns, and drinking at the dances and athletic events. "Are we adults or young animals?" I had a view of the tops of fifteen hundred heads at this point, and Mr. Huit's was virtually in a state of perpetual, vertical motion. From then on, I really flowed, telling them that their interests would best be served by the student council working in harmony with the faculty, that sports and pep rallies certainly had their place but that classes were, at least, equally important, and that certainly it was all right to have fun, but that there was a time and a place for it. What I really stressed was proportion—things must be kept in proportion. And when I was finished, I received twice the applause of any other speaker. The election was in the bag.

After my victory had been announced the next week, I ran into Herman in the hall. I didn't think he'd even speak to me after that fiasco of an assembly, let alone congratulate me, but there that incessantly ready hand was, open like a trap for me. "Well, Gleaseman, you won," he said heartily. "Of course I won!" I answered, wincing as his hand closed. "Don't tell me you're really surprised. Don't tell me that." That got him. He looked down at the floor, puffing his cheeks out. When he looked up again, I saw that fanatic light still smoldering in his yellow-hued eyes. After all this. Somehow I vaguely figured that this light should be extinguished just out of kindness, that something should end his anguish, this beating of the head against walls that he could never faze. So I said, "Glueker, if I were you, I'd shoot myself. I really would." His eyes took fire at this, flaming out of his slack face, and he shouted, "Thanks, Gleaseman. Thanks a lot. But you can stick that. You can stick that you know where!" I shrugged as he went stomping off down the hard hall, still a fanatic.

That election led into a splendid senior year of disciplined bedlam that was the culmination of many things for me. And I saw little of Herman, although he was probably still spectacularly, pathetically around as much as ever. But I was continually in a rush, too preoccupied with meetings and tests and sports to have time for any trifles. I had always redeemed the athletic department by being a good student, and flattered the teachers by being a good student and still an athlete, but now, since that campaign speech, the administration loved me too, for possessing such a fine moral character and displaying such a propensity for leadership. And all this combined to sweep me through my final year like a letter on an express train. Suddenly in May there was that edition of the Grantsburg Gazette with two pictures of me in it—one on the front page, as class salutatorian with deep, quizzical wrinkles in my big brow and quietly handsome in my charcoal-black suit, and the other on the sport page, snapped as I breasted the tape, face agonized and muscles screaming, breaking the Conference record for the one hundred yard dash. I did it in 10.2 seconds. At about the same time, I found that I had my choice of literally countless scholarship offers—ten or twelve for football and basket-

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ball, for one or both depending on the wealth of the institution, and one, for which I had personally applied, from Massachusetts Institute of Technology for any particular phase of engineering that might interest me. So I was faced with making something of a decision. Now I loved sports and the idea of enjoying their physical pleasure for a few more years was appealing, but the trouble was that it would only be for a few more years. Besides that, my physics teacher had assured me that with a degree from M.I.T. I'd be commanding a five figure salary within five years after graduation. He also said I should specialize in metallurgy since that was going to be an increasingly vital field, what with rockets and all. M.I.T. it was then, and I sent a letter off accepting the scholarship. A well-plotted future I had.

My cup, if not running over that spring, was certainly foaming high. It foamed highest the night of the Commencement Ball, given annually at the Grantsburg Country Club by the local Chamber of Commerce. I was there with my girl of three years' standing, Alice Burgoyne. She had on a strapless, powder-blue formal which did justice to her firmly tapering back. Alice was a good girl to take to dances. Her figure was trim and clean, not in any way extravagant. You could tell that those small, firm breasts would not sag in twenty years time and that children wouldn't spread those hips. Not that I was concerned with thoughts of Alice twenty years from now, you understand. I just prefer proportionate people and she was that, and we were both full of vodka at the Commencement Ball. I must have been resplendent in my white dinner jacket. I felt resplendent anyway, standing or dancing with my arm around Alice. The vodka was having wonderful effects. Everything took on an amazing distinctness—even the smoke, floating low and blue over the bright, spinning mob on the dance-floor, was vividly etched to my eyes. And my brain was a hot, happy coil—I couldn't stop shouting to everyone I knew, shaking hands and slapping backs. I guess Mr. Crowell, an English teacher who gave me a couple of B's, causing me to be salutatorian instead of valedictorian, summed it up pretty well, when he said, rather grimly, "Oh, ye laurels," as he walked by us. And I said, "Oh, ye Gods," which I thought was a pretty funny retort at the time.

Herman Glueker was there too. Alice and I were alone at the bar, drinking some kind of thick, green punch, when he loomed up before us. His heavy hair gleamed from vast quantities of hair cream which still failed to subdue its wildness, and his gash of a mouth was spread into the most enormous smile I had ever seen. "Isn't it great," he roared. "Isn't this stupendous! . . . Wonderful!" He threw out his arm in a gesture that seemed to include everything and everybody in the whole ballroom—and just about everybody there that night had helped to laugh him off the stage a year before. That was what registered in my distinct mind. "You think it's wonderful," I said, confounded. "You!" "Why ,yes," he nodded. "Your high school days are the happiest days of your life." Both Alice and I were strangely embarrassed and the three of us stood in silence for a long minute. Then Alice said sweetly, "Where's your date, Herman?"

"I don't have one," Herman answered. "Janet McKinley already promised to go out with Phil Granberg."

"You asked Janet McKinley!" I shouted, almost hysterical with glee. Alice kicked me in the ankle. Janet McKinley was only the ripest, most beautiful broad in the whole damn school—a regular earth goddess.

Alice went on with admirable complacence. "Why, you should have asked someone else, then, Herman. There are just lots of girls."

"Oh, I don't settle for second best," Herman answered, looking at the floor.

"You don't?" I mumbled.

"I don't."

"Well," I said. "That's just fine. I'm glad

to know that. By the way, Herman, what are you going to do now that you're out of school? The Iron Works? Uncle Sam? Not college certainly? The Iron Works."

"Oh, I might get to college, sometime," Herman said, his face guileless like a child's. "But I've got to get some money first. I should have got a scholarship like you, but I didn't. Besides there's lots of things I want to do. Maybe I'll go out West or down South. Somewhere where the country's big, you know. I need lots of room. You're not going to catch me at the Iron Works."

I thought silently that the Iron Works didn't know how lucky it was. Herman would have been sure to hold up production by falling into the blast furnace, or something. "Well, westward-ho," I said, as the band began to clang away again, and started to ease Alice toward the floor. But Herman grabbed me by the arm and thrust his open hand at me, saying, "Well, Gleaseman, I probably won't be seeing you again. I'm leaving tomorrow. So put 'er there!"

I looked at that hand, that so damn-strong hand, red and with hair growing like black wheat, and figured to break it off for him this last time. I literally attacked it, putting all my one hundred and eighty compact pounds into my grip, and Herman took it without a change of expression. It was like trying to squeeze water from a block of oak. I looked at Herman with strain-glazed eyes. Where did the power in his hand come from? Certainly not from any connection with that elongated football of a body. It was just there—in the hand. And maybe in his fanatic eyes. Suddenly, I felt foolish, in spite of the vodka, standing there with my face flushed and contorted in front of Alice. I let my hand slip limply from Herman's and stepped back.

"Well, I got to be running along now," Herman said. "There's a few others I have to say good-by to before I leave. It's been good knowing you all these years, Gleaseman." With that, he turned and walked away from us, swaying in perfect off-rhythm to the music, and cleaved his way through the tangled mass of undulating couples, bumping a few roughly, but making his way steadily to the other side of the floor.

"The Iron Works will get him yet," I laughed to Alice.

Coffee and Comments . . .

(Cont. from Page 9)

movie in the series worth seeing again. It gains this quality by the familiarity with which Bergman treats his narrow subject, hence the comic atmosphere and faintly sardonic approach. As usual there is counterplay, death symbols and young love, age and beauty which is Bergman's metaphysical style but in essence Bergman has a comic intellect, much like Christopher Fry, and his sense of horror at the clumsiness of people seeks and demands relief. In the case of *Summer Night* a bed grotesquely emerges from a wall as the failure at suicide despondently beats his head against a wall and the heavily sentimental death wish of the hero is rewarded with blank cartridges in a game of Russian roulette. Throughout the film Bergman's complex loving and questioning of fools, young, and the greedy (the count who boasts of his women) is admirably juxtaposed until the dawn comes with its exultant belief that it is enough to have life, to laugh and love. It almost makes one forget the weary dismissal by the dowager, "I am tired of people, but that doesn't prevent my loving them."

The films *Gervaise* and *The Nights of Caberia* are both good, but they are good in the way that the American films *The Goddess,* and *I Want To Live* are good. (I equate *Gervaise* and *The Goddess,* and *I Want To Live* with *The Nights of Caberia.*) All four films have a distinct and aware sociological background common to them, and especially the directors, particularly Fellini with *Caberia,* emotional and dramatic point home. I feel, however, that in the end each of these films end relying on the skills of the gifted actresses cast in the title roles. (Since Fellini is wed to Massini there is no doubt of this.) It is difficult to say that Paddy Chayefsky is a failure since he alone is the most earnestly persuasive of American screen writers —picture Faulkner doodling boy meets girl meets pyramid a thousand times before writing *The Land of the Pharohs*—but it is true, Chayefsky is a little wearying and tedious. There is little contrast between *The Bachelor Party, Middle of the Night,* and *Marty. The Goddess* is his most successful film, but it is not the film he wrote if

one studies the script he published in *Esquire*. It is Kim Stanley's despair and capable neurotic projection which gives its final and total effect on the screen. Equally effective is Maria Schell's *Gervaise;* it is her smile, her irresistible femininity that we protest the damage to; and to substitute, say Joan Crawford, in the midst, all of the watered down Zola would make only suds for a little laundress to mildly splash on the screen. Still there is a haunting, dark look down the alley of *Gervaise's* Paris in the film; and it is enough to make me wish for a gutsy, honest film to emerge from the socially aware and put an end to these half honest attempts. *I Want To Live* is corn, but it pops and bounces across the screen under the bitchy, hot breath of Susan Hayward in her strongest dimension as an actress, a women in torment. She grunts, groans, pops her eyes, pulls her hair, screams, whimpers and whines more effectively than any actress since Pola Negri; and I love it. Everything she does is exhausting and twenty feet tall; the abandon of sensible motivation is hardly missed. It is a tour de force, and one leaves the theatre unable to recall anything other than Miss Hayward's histrionics; indeed, I suspect this is how Miss Hayward intended and demanded it (she owned 39% of the picture), but there is not a single scene as honest as in *I'll Cry Tomorrow* when Susan walks twitching with the D.T.'s down skid row. This is the way I am about Giulietta Massini, an incomparably better actress. I leave *Caberia* stunned by her virtuosity. Her walk, the quick small gestures ,the wit and depth of understanding she creates almost cause me to forget that scene after scene has been set up to create this stunning effect (the actor's bedroom, Caberia in a nightclub, Caberia in love). Fellini is too fine a director to allow his wife all the honors, and the sights and sounds of Rome—even the feel—linger as long as the effective Massini performance. I keep thinking what a hell of a film could be made with all four actresses, a sort of adult *The Best of Everything,* with dialogue by Chayefsky and Fellini's direction it would be worth maybe a dollar and a quarter to me.

Rice is a Japanese film. It is slow, dull and incredibly inept—a sort of Oriental *Grapes of Wrath.* The final third of the film is most effective. It has a simplicity and insight which is universal. The old woman is immediately appealing, and her defeat and disastrous despair have an honest ring that seems far more significant than the gradual corruption of Japanese youth. I don't doubt that a brilliant and absorbing film could be made from the disillusionment in post-war Japan, but *Rice* tries to do too much and to be too commercial (the nudes and lovemaking; even the supposed traditional temple dance is credited to a choreographer). I am willing to accept Japanese complexity on the screen. *Ugetsu* is a significant film classic in my opinion; but I am not willing to endure uncomfortable seats for an evening of pedestrian and unconvincing social consciousness.

Before the sun sets in the east I must talk about the curious, half-masterpiece, *Pather Panchali,* an Indian film. It is often dull, but more often it is fascinating. It is self-consciously arty, but often spontaneously beautiful. It has humanity, yet occasionally it is an alien tradition of humanity. I am positive audiences have come away impressed with Satyajit Ray's picture of an Indian family twenty years ago, and are as eager as I am for the rest of the triology to appear. Yet I am disturbed that I do not yet know all that I want to of Apu, that I have not seen enough to understand and know what happened to his father during that vague but horrific desertion—I was profoundly moved by the death of the sister, but I am not willing to leave it alone. I want to know its effect on Apu. I demand to see *Apuajito* and *The World of Apu* before I can say I understand what Ray is doing with Apu, who is after all the central figure of the thing. *Pather Panchali,* in context, may be a tremendous, human document.

The Captain from Koepenick is a color remake of a German classic tale. It is comic opera—bouffe, and the Germans seem to love it; but then they loved that Mario Lanza picture they made too.

Now I have nothing against comedy; my secret ambition was to be a night club comedian (and so I apologize occasionally for my

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smart alecky tone. I ate too much Time magazine for breakfast today.) If I were writing a handbook on how to judge a movie, and at this point I feel I could or might have to, I would deal almost exclusively in terms of screen comedy, its growth, its truth, its joy and beauties. To say that I was not amused by the pleasant little British comedies would be untrue, I enjoyed them. They're a little like jellybeans; good enough one by one, but close together a bit bland and cloying. The British make these pictures like jellybeans too. Since *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* to the heights of the best of Guinness, and on and on these pictures emerge at regular intervals from the British film makers. In fact it is disturbing when one considers how frequent and alike they are. The polish and precision of the comedic casts of these pictures is clearly evident, but overall one longs for the untidyness and disorder of comic illogicality, dislocation and happy confusion, and the balletic bounce of true spontaniety that makes Guiness' latest effort *The Horse's Mouth* and Billy Wilder's joyful burlesque *Some Like It Hot* such marvelous hours in the dark. In fact, these are both so good that it is almost ungrateful to say they are not perfect. Interestingly enough these two films have had more honest social comment than any two films I have seen of the past ten years. As much as I admire Michael Redgrave, Robert Morley, Terry-Thomas, and Alastair Sim I cannot help wishing for better pictures.

Better pictures are available too. *Room At The Top* which is the most significant British film in years, as well as one of the best, should have been on the series and not sold downtown on its merits as a sex film for kids. Rather than *Rice,* I (and nearly every enthusiast I know) would like to see a film by Yasujiro Ozu, reputed to be the finest of all Japanese moviemakers. It would have been better to show *Smiles of a Summer Night* if it had been followed by the later films of Bergman, i.e., *The Seventh Seal, Wild Strawberries, The Magician,* and his latest, *The Virgin of the Well* which would give perhaps a direction to the series it now lacks, except for a glib films-from-everywhere attitude, disportionate when one considers the number of British comedies. *Gervaise* is old stuff now, and critically its reputation is far below the equally French *Les Mistons* and the agonizing beauties of De Sica's *The Roof* both available. *He Who Must Die* has gone abegging while we must watch the buffooneries of those not very horrifying *Belles* from *St. Trinians.* (Although *He Who Must Die* is not as good as one might guess from the reviews.) Music lovers might prefer *Eugene Onegin,* rarely performed in the U. S. anywhere, to the familiar antics of young lawyers (or young doctors.) Myself, I would like again to find one film of the complete enchantment that held me when, over ten years ago, I spent an entire day with Charles Chaplin's *The Gold Rush.* But the truth is, and I know it, these mild little comedies sustain the boxoffice and the Society. The function of the Society seems to be little more than assuring a box office guarantee. It has no policy other than to ensure an offering of foreign films, and for that I suppose I must be grateful. Or rent a projector and films for and by myself. Yet I cannot wonder if such a society could not be even more than a potential list of patrons.

The Desert Mind

By ALAN GODDARD

The desert mind longs for the sea.
He walks with tide gone eyes
And dreams of the seldom sea,
Of small islands,
And women, pearl fleshed and dark,
Like sun drummed, ripened fruit
That hangs from graceful branches
That sweep the sky
And shelter the sand.
He wants to walk
On that seldom shore
A sand rippled, muscled arm,
Which embraces his gentle sea.

Simply Lateral . . .

(Cont. from Page 14)

When she opened the door to him, Edward smiled and said, "You look lovely, my dear. Let's go to my apartment."

They took a cab.

The lighting in Edward's apartment was indirect, the stereo was muted, and the ice was out. Madeline with her Old Fashioned walked past the tan sofa and the cinnamon love seat, and sat down in the beige canvas chair. Edward smiled. "Come, my dear, the sofa is much more comfortable."

"No, thank you."

Smoothly he crossed the room, and smoothly rested his hand on the inside of her arm, just above the elbow. "You're afraid of me," he said. "Don't be, Madeline. Come."

"No, thank you."

He tried once more, this time with his hand on her shoulder, barely touching her neck.

"I said no."

Edward stopped smiling. He stared at her, then strode over to the stereo set, turned it off, folded his arms and glowered. "Good heavens, girl, what are you waiting for?"

Madeline looked at the rug.

"A sable coat, a string of pearls?"

It was the first time Madeline had thought about those things, but thinking about them now, she rejected them. "No."

"A trip to Capri? I'm not offering, you understand, just curious. A run-of-the-play contract?"

"No." Madeline felt tears stinging her eyelids, the only time she had had this sensation since last year, when she hit her elbow on a filing cabinet drawer.

"Well what then, for the good Lord's sake?"

She began to cry, rustily at first, then wholeheartedly in great gasping wails. "I don't know." Nothing had ever seemed so sad. "I don't even know."

Edward snorted and turned on all the lights. "Don't do that, it's wet and ugly. Go on home, there's a good girl, and I won't be angry. Go."

Madeline was out in the hall before she remembered. She stopped wailing. As much as she hated the idea of going back, not going back was unthinkable. She went back.

Edward frowned when he saw her, but Madeline met his eyes squarely and defiantly. "Don't you think life is a merry-go-round ride?"

Edward stared at her a long, long time. Finally he said, "My dear, have you ever been on a merry-go-round?"

Madeline blinked. "Why no," she said slowly. "No, I haven't."

Edward shook his head, collected their glasses, and started for the kitchen. She called after him, "I wanted to once, but Mother said my dress would get dirty."

Water ran in the sink. "Someday," he said over the noise. "Someday, Madeline, when you are absolutely sure your mother isn't looking, take my advice. Throw all caution to the winds and *ride* on one."

Madeline did not go home. She took a cab to Coney Island, where she headed for the bright little island of the merry-go-round as in a trance. Once there, she could hardly wait for it to stop, and when it stopped she got on before anyone else.

The first time around she chose a white horse, was careful to tuck her skirt around her calves, held on tightly to the pole, and closed her eyes.

The second time around she opened her eyes and forgot about her skirt.

The third time around she changed to a gold charger with flaring nostrils and held on only to the reins.

The fourth time around she hummed the music and waved to the people watching.

The fifth time around she laughed out loud the whole way.

Then she got off and walked crookedly to find a cab.

Some time later she knocked on Leon's door. When he opened it and smiled at her, she said, "I've come to have my picture painted."

CHIMNEY CORNER

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A GOOD PLACE TO EAT

Life, a poem

By AL PLEASANTON

Al Pleasanton is a freshman forestry major from Connecticut. This is his initial contribution to Venture.

A thread
To a point
Slicked
The eye through
Various texture woven
New
Sundry hue;
Not staved true
Life glances
Chances strife
Frayed
Man determined
Remade.

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The Interrogator . . .

(Cont. from Page 16)

Mike's, from the corner, felt a little wistful, wishing he was going with Roy, out of the room and far away from Mike. He remembered the sessions he and Roy had had over coffee, laughing about this kid or that one, and then he remembered the woman. "How are you, Mrs. Richardson?"

"How do you do, Jim," she said, and smiled. He had, Jim recalled suddenly, exchanged a few words with her about a dozen times in the six years they had been neighbors down on Sixth Street. She was a slender woman and finely built, with blue eyes that had begun to fade just a little, and immaculately waved gray-blonde hair. "Have you heard anything more? I've been so distraught, and then when you called me back again today—"

"We don't know any more than we did yesterday," Jim said. He felt apologetic in the face of her sophisticated distress. "I'm sorry, Mrs. Richardson."

She sat down, adjusting her fine gray flannel skirt. "And Mike, has he added anything?"

Jim coughed. "Mike seems to think it was something in Bonnie's home life that made her run away," he said.

Mrs. Richardson flicked a speck from her skirt with her pale blue gloves. "Home life!" Mike, what gave you an idea like that? You know we did everything we could to make the little wretch happy."

"Yeah," said Mike. His eyes were fixed on nothing.

Jim walked to his desk and spread open another manila folder. "Have you been able to think of anything since yesterday, anything at all that might help us? Anywhere she might have gone?"

Irritation flickered across the woman's face, sharpening the tiny lines. It was gone immediately, and she recrossed her legs with the faint sound of sheer silk brushing itself. "I haven't, Jim. I'm afraid I can't help at all."

Jim was beginning to recover the poise that had slipped so far during his interview with Mike. "Mrs. Richardson," he said, "did you approve of Mike as a date for Bonnie?"

She glanced at Mike. "No, Jim, we didn't feel that Mike was really—suitable."

He added a note. "Why not?"

"Well, I—birds of a feather, you know. So many of his friends were—well, one hears things, you know."

"Didn't you try to keep Bonnie from seeing so much of him?"

She looked a little pained, and her voice dropped briefly into a more natural tone. "Have you ever tried to keep Bonnie from doing something she wanted to do?"

Jim glanced at Mike and then looked again hastily, almost sure that a smile had passed over his features. "What about Mike's friends, Mrs. Richardson? Johnny for one?"

"Yes, Johnny Kramer. And Todd Stockton, of course."

"You've seen quite a bit of the two of them?"

"Enough, certainly."

"Can you sum them up? Take Johnny, for example."

She patted one flawless, graying curl. "Oh, Johnny always seemed harmless enough. Plenty of bravado, with those greasy sideburns. One hears things about his mother, but—"

"And Todd?"

She gave Mike a wary glance and adjusted her skirt unnecessarily. "Hasn't he discussed Todd with you?" she asked Jim. A smile had spread across her carefully painted features.

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"Todd Stockton? Why?" Jim felt suddenly apprehensive.

She shuddered daintily. "Unnatural little beasts!"

"Unnatural?" Jim looked at her, not comprehending. The odor of her perfume suddenly drifted to him, sweet and a little stale. He frowned. "Todd's the boy we have living with us up here at the station about half the time." Uncomfortable and not knowing why, he laughed a little. "Started skipping school in the first grade and shoplifting in the second."

Mrs. Richardson's smile was significantly broader. "Todd does more than shoplift." She turned. "Doesn't he, Mike?"

"Bitch," Mike said distinctly.

Her face steeled. Jim watching, briefly caught the predatory hook of her features. "Careful, Mike," she said, and laughed. "There's worse things than bitches."

"Are there?" said Mike. His softly shaded eyes met her hard blue ones. Jim felt forgotten. Unnoticed, he looked from the woman's darkening face to the boy's, with his sensuous gray eyes.

Mrs. Richardson dropped her gaze first, and covering, swung around to Jim. "It's quite all right," she said, her words a little hurried, "we mustn't mind him." She caught herself and dropped her final words precisely. "It's just that Mike likes boys better than girls."

Jim blinked and felt a heavy flush move up over his own face. He felt naked before the penetrating eyes of the woman and the boy. Futilely he groped for words to cover himself, searching vainly for something, anything to say. His embarrassment was reasonless, he had heard the same words before,

Engraving by Brian Owen

here in this hot little room, but still his face smouldered.

He stammered, "I—I—"

Mrs. Richardson had forgotten him. She leaned forward toward Mike, the sharp angles of her body jutting through the fine gray suit. "What did you want with my girl?" She swung back at Jim. "Where'd they take her? Can't you get it out of him?"

Jim, taken aback, stammered, "How? Third degree?"

She was paying no attention to him, but had turned again on Mike. "What did you want with Bonnie? Why'd you have to come around her? Everything was fine, everything was all right until she went out with you!"

She looked away from the boy, and looked up at the dull tan wall, her eyes blank. "Everything was fine," she said again, and suddenly her face crumpled. "Everything was fine," she said, and the tears spilled from her eyes, running down her face in crooked trails through the rouge and powder base. Her mouth was slack, her eyes almost bewildered.

"I bought her pretty clothes. Did you know that?" She looked from Jim to Mike. "Did you know that? So many pretty clothes, pretty dresses, red and blue, and some sparkly ones. But she didn't wear them very often. And shoes, so many pretty shoes." She sniffled, her eyes bleak.

"I always liked shoes," she said. Hunched over in the chair, she began to cry in great hoarse gulps that racked her body in the exquisite suit. Except for the fly, still buzzing at the window, her sobs were the only sound in the room. Finally she stopped, swiping at her eyes with her gloves. She gathered up her purse and went out the door, closing it quietly.

Jim swallowed. Mike was looking dreamily at nothing. Jim felt the back of his neck begin to tingle.

The door opened slowly, and Jim jumped nervously. The policeman who had brought in Mrs. Richardson was at the doorway.

"Hate to bother you with anything more, Jim, but the boys got talking to the Stockton kid, and they think he might add quite a bit to the story. We brought him over here for

you to talk to." He looked inquisitive. "Having a pretty bad time, huh?"

"What? Stockton? Oh." Jim blinked as he finally registered the words. His mouth was dry. "Fine, Roy."

Roy reached behind him and hauled a boy into the room with disinterested forcefulness. "Here you go, Jim. Somebody saw him five miles out on the River Road the night the kids left, walking back into town. The boys figured he might know something about it, so they drug him in. He says he don't know anything about it, though. He says he was taking a walk."

Jim stood up and looked at Todd Stockton. He was a pale, plump boy with yellowish eyes and a mop of kinky, mouse-colored hair. Jim felt his control swell back. Todd was the same boy who had stood in his office for the past five years,, frightened or sullen or cocky, but always vulnerable, always easy to poke and prod and hold against the light.

"Okay, Todd. What've you been doing?"

"Nothing," Todd said. His eyes darted about the room, lighting momentarily on Mike and then shifting to Jim's face. He watched him with his yellowish, calculating eyes.

"Snap out of it!" Jim said sharply, and Todd dropped his eyes. Jim carefully considered a number of possible openings, and then plunged in reasonlessly, trying to reach the source of his own anger. "What's with Mike and Bonnie? What do you know about it?"

Todd stared, shuffling a little. "Huh?"

"Did you like Bonnie, Todd? What was she like?"

Todd looked from the ceiling to his toes and back again. "Oh I dunno," he said, glancing at Mike. Okay, I guess." He considered, his lips curving in a little smile. "Wore her pants pretty tight."

Roy snickered from his corner. "Yeah, I remember that, she was a great one for those tight pants." He broke off as Jim glanced at him and back to Todd.

"Did you like Bonnie, Todd?" he repeated.

Todd frowned. "Like all girls, the little—" There was a harsh noise from Mike, and Todd abruptly fell silent. Jim, pushing away a wave of embarrassment, changed the subject to something more relevant.

"What kind of car do you drive?"

The sudden switching of fields caught Todd off balance. "Fifty Chevie—" he caught himself, then continued unhappily, "It's orange."

"License?"

"52-3-4848." Reflectively he began to scratch himself, beginning with his hip and working around to his inner thigh.

"Where is it that you have to walk? Especially five miles out of town?"

Todd ran his small pink tongue over his lips. "It ain't working so good."

"Bonnie and John take it?"

"Huh?" His plump, damp lips parted a little.

"Bonnie and John. Where'd they go in it?"

"Go to it!" encouraged Roy, his face mildly stimulated. Jim glanced at him and turned back to Todd. "Where'd they go, Todd?"

Todd's face was contorted. He looked over at Mike, as if for permission to speak, and then bubbled with words.

"They—they left their car out there on the Road. It's in the brush—they said they was—ah, fish! They went to Wyoming, because Johnny knew somebody there."

Jim walked to the desk. "Okay, Roy, you can tell them to start looking for an orange Chevie instead of a black Pontiac. Wyoming. You've got the plate number. Orange," he repeated distastefully, looking at Todd. Todd shifted his weight from one foot to the other.

"Hey, I didn't know what they were going to do till they left!" Todd's pale face was a little apprehensive.

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"Didn't you know it was serious after they left?" Jim asked briefly.

"Oh, I dunno—" he twisted his body from one side to the other in uneasiness. "Can I leave now?"

Todd looked around the room in desperation, avoiding Mike. "Nothing," he said unhappily, and then added tentatively, "Bonnie was going away." He stopped "Please can I go now? My old lady, she'll be on me again."

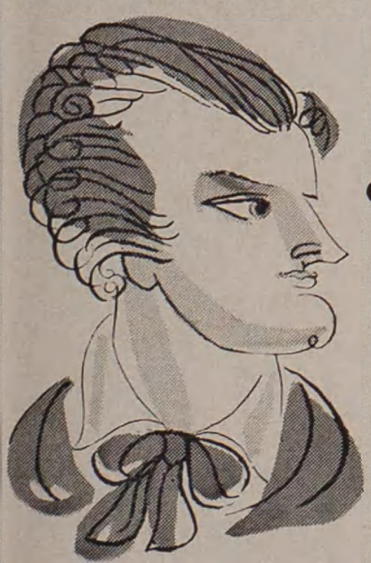
Jim hesitated, then shrugged. "Go ahead. We'll find you when we want you again."

Roy looked after him, his face disappointed. "Heck, you should have kept him, Jim, I've seen you have a lot more fun with them than that."

"Sure," Jim said. He picked up a pencil and laid it down again. So he had saved Bonnie. He thought about her, her blue eyes, and the way they were planted in her determined face, and he remembered her square white, strong hands.

He looked at Mike, and Mike raised his eyes and looked at him expressionlessly.

BYRON



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There were tired lines around his transparent gray eyes, and at the corners of his thin, hard mouth. "Done with me?" he asked.

Done with him, Jim thought. His stomach contracted, and he winced. "Yes," he said, "I'm done with you."

He watched Mike leave. For a little while his footsteps could be heard in the corridor outside the room, but soon only the echo was left. Far down the hall a heavy door opened and closed. Jim's knees felt drained. He sat down abruptly.

Roy was still looking out into the hall. "Heck," he said, and turned back to Jim, grinning. "You pound away at that mean kid for two days, and then Todd Stockton spills it in five minutes."

"You'd better go get in touch with the patrol headquarters," Jim said.

"Sure," said Roy. "Funny about those kids. Take Mike, now. Don't tell. That's the only thing they know. The only thing. Know that, Jim?"

"Yes," said Jim.

"Wonder what they'll do to 'em," Roy said. He was still grinning, a little vacantly.

"Depends on whether the Richardsons want to prosecute, I suppose," Jim said shortly. He gathered the folders from the desk.

"S'pose they will?"

Jim thought of Bonnie. "I doubt it."

"Maybe not," said Roy. He looked Jim over carefully. "What's with you? You usually come out of here full of fight and ready to ship the bunch of them. You sick?"

"I'm not sick," Jim said. He started for the door. Roy hurried after him.

"What happened, Jim? That fairy Mike get across to you?" He laughed, waiting for Jim to laugh. "He's sure a fairy from way back, isn't he?"

Jim did not answer, but kept going down the hall, hurrying. Roy began to laugh. "What's the matter, Jim? You fall in love with him, maybe?"

His laughter could still be heard when Jim pushed through the heavy door into the cold open air and slammed the door behind him.

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